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Nuclear Debate Continues in Missouri

A proposal to bring a second nuclear reactor to Missouri will return this year for the Legislature's consideration.

CWIP stands for construction work in progress. In 2009, [Senate Bill 228](#) was introduced. Amid a firestorm of controversy, the idea was tabled by both Ameren UE and the bill sponsor. Now, the idea is again under consideration.

In a nutshell, CWIP would change state law so Ameren could bill customers for the cost of financing a second Callaway nuclear plant during construction. Charging for CWIP has been illegal in Missouri since voters passed that law in 1976.

This time, the governor says he has put together a consortium of electric utility officials who will bear the initial costs of getting a site permit. This is a different approach than what was tried last year. It takes a long time to get approval of a site for a plant and the "okay" to actually build it. Speculation was, in 2009, that it would be approximately a 10-year timeline, from start to finish.

Ameren's Callaway Nuclear Plant has been in

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operation since 1984. A second plant would help Missouri serve a growing population and provide thousands of jobs for years to come.

Unfortunately, the cost is the biggest unknown factor about this project. During debate on the first CWIP proposal, lawmakers were told several different variations regarding how customers would be affected by the initial CWIP proposal. Ameren officials told lawmakers CWIP would equal a 10 or 11 percent increase to customers' bills. State regulators said the increase would have been closer to 23 percent by the year 2017. I have not yet seen figures attached to the new proposal.

The Legislature was told in 2009 that the process of building a second nuclear plant would or could never happen. Now, we are hearing it can be done more cheaply than before and we still have the time to find a site, do all of the other preliminary work and then build it. Like anything else in the Legislature, if the people want it, then it will be done. Otherwise, there is always next year.

In a session where job creation and tackling the state budget will be the top priorities for lawmakers, CWIP will also be in the spotlight.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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